



POTTERS
GUILD
of BRITISH
COLUMBIA

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Newsletter

Summer Issue 1997

Raku: Gordon Hutchens & Sam Kwan Face-Off

Imagine, if you will, a gathering of artists and writers at a garden party in Tokyo, circa 1911. Before them are a number of unglazed pots upon which they are invited to write or paint. The pots are dipped into a tub of creamy white lead glaze and set around the top of a charcoal kiln a couple of feet beyond the verandah of the garden. After a few minutes the pots are placed inside the glowing kiln with long handled tongs. The fuel is fanned and in about half an hour the glaze can be seen through the spy hole, melted and glossy. The pieces are removed to cool in the air.

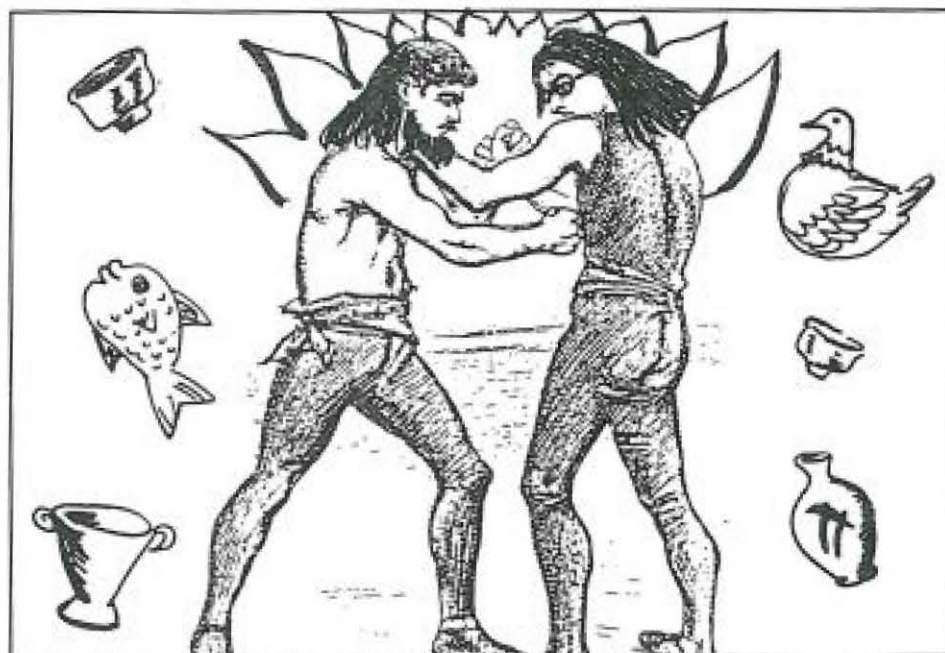
About five minutes pass and the pots are gingerly inspected. It is at this garden party

Raku - love it or hate it. As with everything, there are some aspects I love and some I hate. Where do these feelings come from? Some come from doing it, some from looking at it, and some are passed on from our teachers (one of my teachers hated majolica, another hated anything high-fire). When I teach I try to be quiet about my prejudices and look for the positive.

Mostly I love raku. Flick it with your finger. I love the humble "thunk" that brings me down to earth from my obsession with that ethereal high temperature "ping". As we do it here, raku is cultural hybrid with some east,

Sam continues on p. 4, column 1

Gordon continues on p.4, column 2



Editor's Notes

January 97 issue of the Newsletter.

***I just got off the phone with that well-known critic of raku, Sam Kwan, who I asked to provide me with a "why I hate Raku" article (I also asked Gordon Hutchens to provide the "why I love raku" side of the story). After reassuring Sam that he probably won't be lynched by outraged aficionados of raku, we started talking about the John Leach workshop. We both agreed it was inspiring to hear a man who has, quite simply, led a happy life full of gratitude that he makes his living doing what he loves to do. This is not to say that John doesn't have to work hard and pay attention to the business side of his pottery.

A short discussion on John's pricing policy, at the end of the workshop, had caused heated discussion amongst a group of Sam's students. They had a difficult time reconciling the idea that John made pots for everybody, considering the prices that his work commands. Sam and I talked about this paradox. There is a pitcher of John's in the Gallery that I would love to own, unfortunately I don't have the \$350 it costs. Or at least I don't perceive myself as having that money. If I decided to give up movies, coffee and the Globe & Mail for the next 3 or 4 months I could probably afford to get it. It has become, for me, a question of which desires get priority. Paul Mathieu touched rather brilliantly on this point in the interview he gave in the

John has a wholesale price to which he adds an additional 60% in his own store. As far as he is concerned, once a retailer buys his work they can mark it up as much as they want. The plate he sells for about \$55 in his store may go for \$400 in Japan. He acknowledges that a gallery has greater expenses than his own workshop store.

But back to affordability. For about \$200 you can get a complete John Leach place setting for one. With that \$200 you purchase over 30 years of skill belonging to a third generation potter. Your place setting will probably survive decades of regular use, melding beauty and function. You will not, however, be buying preciousness.

Walk into any china shop and you will find that \$200 for a place setting is mid-price range. With that \$200 purchase you will be buying a factory-made, slip-moulded, transfer-decorated set of porcelain. A brush stroke or two of oxide may have been applied by the hand of the factory worker who does only that particular task all day! That's what hand-painted generally means on commercial china.

When, in my mind's eye, I compare these two imaginary sets of dinnerware, I know that the porcelain set will look fragile and

precious, seemingly unable to withstand the hazards of daily use. John's plates and bowls give the impression they would survive a riotous feast. It says something about our cultural values that most people find it much easier to justify spending their money on the factory-made object.

The porcelain setting is benefitting from an out-moded hierarchy of materials. There is a cultural memory of the time when factory porcelain was rare and rich, and every village had a production potter making ware for daily use. Today, that situation is reversed. Most people's kitchen cupboards are filled with the production of factories. For some reason, the value of hand-made pots has not undergone the polar reversal that would reflect the actual proportion of potter-made ware to factory-made goods.

I suppose that I am trying to convince those students that John's work is very affordable for the "common" person. The porcelain setting might get taken out of the china cabinet 10 times a year, or \$20 per use for the first year. John's set will be used at least 200 times, at about \$1 per use. And I think that most of the people reading this article would much prefer the stoneware set anyway!

Have a great summer, see you in the fall.

Karen Opas

Potter's Guild of B.C. Newsletter Website: <http://www.cwin.com/chome/redhen/Pguild>

The Newsletter is published 10 times yearly as an information link for members. Submissions of articles, letters and anything else of interest are happily received and should be submitted by the 2nd Wednesday of any month. Unclassifieds and articles may be edited for space needs. The fax number is 604/669 - 5627.

Editor: Karen Opas General Manager: Jane Matthews Editorial Board: Tam Irving, Gillian McMillan, Carol Mayer
Gallery Assistants: Julia Maika, Christina Loch, Melanie Corbin, Tamara Ball

1997 Membership Fees (Based on Calendar Year):

- Individual: \$40
- Seniors/Full time Students: \$25
- Institutions/ Groups / Corporations: \$80
- Family or Studio (max. 4 persons): \$55

Advertising Rates (not including GST):

- Full Page: \$130 1/2 page: \$65
- 1/4 Page: \$40 Business Card Size \$25

Unclassified Rates (not including GST)

- Members: FREE
- Nonmembers: 3 lines \$8 each additional line: \$2

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Email: bcpguild@intouch.bc.ca

Corner Chair

This is my last corner chair, as I will be passing the gavel to Ron Vallis in June. It has been a busy year with many projects. The end of my term was highlighted by the AGM. It was inspiring and endearing to see so much experience in one room. I hope we will continue to recognize the people who have served to make this organization successful.

I thank all the board members for their hard work and accomplishments. Good luck to Pat Taddy as he leaves the board. Carol Mayer will be stepping down as a board member but will remain on the book committee and the exhibition committee.

Welcome to our new board members, Debra Sloan and Frank Turco. Janet Turpin is now official. We'll try not to overwhelm you right away.

It was decided at the AGM that we would not raise membership fees next year or reduce the number of issues of the newsletters. This leaves us with finding another way to support the programs listed in the "Purposes of the Society" (see annual report). The most obvious solution is fundraising. So be prepared to be called upon to donate or participate in fundraising events. We will be holding events in conjunction with the North West Ceramics Foundation and on our own. Lottery for Pottery was a success so we hope to make it an annual event. John Cloutier is planning a fall dinner with the Chef's Society. Members will be asked to donate a plate. Proceeds will go to raise funds for scholarships. Also in June, we will have a "Too Good for the Shards Pile Sale" to raise money to buy a new printer (one of my unfulfilled goals for the year).

Another way to raise extra funds is through workshops. The John Leach Workshop had a registration of 100. More of the same will help. Any suggestions will be welcomed.

Thank you all for this positive learning experience of being chair. I will stay on the board until the book is published. Good luck, Ron.

Linda Doherty



Book Update

Colour Photos

The second photo session of May 6th was a marathon. Sixty photos in 10 hours. The results look fabulous thanks to Ken Mayer. Thanks also to Laura van der Linde and Darlene Nairne for their help.

Make sure you pick up your pot by June 12th or it will be mailed to you at your own expense. Please call Linda or Jane to make exceptions. Unfortunately, a few people missed the deadline and one photo didn't turn out, so we will have to have one more session.

Blurbs

When you receive your edited version please return the yellow slip signed. This is our way of knowing you have approved the last version sent to you. This process is taking longer than expected, so you may not have received yours yet.

Black & White Photos

We still have not received all of the personal photos. You know who you are!

Summary

We have 121 artists registered for the book. We received a grant of \$250 from the Sheila Hugh MacKay Foundation. Everyone in the book must be a member of the Potters Guild of B.C., so please make sure you have renewed your membership for 1997.

Too Good for the Shard Pile Sale?

We are in desperate need of a new printer, but it is not in the budget for this year. So we are having a sale of seconds outside the gallery on the weekend of the dragon boat festival, June 20 - 22. If you have a box of pots to donate please call Linda at 420-0415 to arrange for pick-up or delivery. You may price them or leave it up to us. 100% will go towards the printer. So clean off that dusty shelf or hold off adding to your shard pile. If you can make time to sit at the table we'd appreciate your help, and you may have first pick of the pile!

Made in Clay 97

This year's show featured 37 B.C. potters at Performance Works on Granville Island. This year marked the first time that we utilized pipes and drapes to accent individual 10' by 10' booths. We also returned to the format of individuals being responsible for doing their own sales. This seemed to be preferred. For members unable to process Visa/Mastercard/Interac sales the Guild offered an area to do so. Many thanks to Jane and the folks from the gallery for taking care of the many sales that might otherwise have been lost.

Thanks also to Pat Schendel for organizing the ongoing demonstrations under the tent outside. Once again Greenbarn Pottery Supply generously supported the guild by donating a banding wheel and a book on decoration, won through a draw by Julia Maika and Rona Hatherall. Greenbarn also donated five boxes of clay for use during the demonstrations.

I would also like to thank John Cloutier for all the time and energy he put into bringing this together and also for the incredible BBQ salmon dinner with wine sauce and trimmings! Many thanks as well to Fay Hickey and Maggie Kneer for assisting in various organizational details. Also a word of thanks to Rona Hatherall, who is always so quick to say yes on helping with booth layout and anything else which needs to be taken care of. Thanks, Rona. As always, Jane took care of more individual items than space permits me to list here.

All in all, the show seemed to go off without a hitch. No blown circuits, no spilt blood, set up and take down went smoothly. Lots of ideas have come up via questionnaires handed out on site, and I shall compile it and send out a synopsis to all MIC 97 participants so that we can begin planning MIC 98. We still have some areas to change and develop and they will be incorporated into the next event. Finally, my thanks to all the participants who made this an incredibly pleasant experience.

Darrel Hancock

Sam on Raku, Cont. from p.1

that a young British artist, Bernard Leach, would state that "as a result of this experience a dormant impulse must have awakened." He began a search for a teacher and would find one in Ogata Kenzan. This would be one of the beginnings of the studio potter movement in the twentieth century.

Flash forward to 1997 -murky figures remove glowing pots from a small gas fired kiln, depositing them in garbage cans full of shredded paper and billowing acrid smoke. A few minutes later the "vessels" are removed. The overload of copper oxide in the glaze produces the "classic" oil on water effect or the slightly more understated (but equally hard on the eyes) polished copper penny effect.

A process valued for its artistic potentials of surface texture and colour - when used with characteristic restraint - has now become a shallow panacea.

The present state of the raku epidemic immediately brings two concerns to the forefront. The first concern is the general disregard for the relationship of form and surface. We've all been subjected to a myriad of poorly executed forms smothered with a mindlessly applied copper glaze. The general public has now been led to believe that this has become the apex of ceramic virtuosity. Toss in a song and dance about the historical connection with the Japanese tea ceremony, Zen Buddhism and the drama of firing and presentation is complete. Heaven help us.

Fortunately, there are a number of people who believe in maintaining a higher standard. But their work probably gets crowded off the shelves by all manner of "vessels", beasts and fowls decorated with ubiquitous copper sand glaze. Understatement obviously takes too much time to process. If the glaze is dazzling enough the aesthetic and functional concerns are supposedly dealt with (if only life could be so easy). Of course, if the piece is not 100% successful, that's the Zen of the technique. How many times have we heard that?

My other, and possibly more insidious concern, is our obligation to the buying

public. The spotty brown pots of the sixties and seventies are now being replaced by the leaky, non-functional "vessels" of the nineties. Ceramic artists have the unique opportunity of educating each other, as well as the public. An informed viewer can appreciate the quality and detail contained in a well executed piece, and not be deceived by novelty.

On the plus side, Raku is a technique that is only part of the broader ceramic spectrum. It can be used as an exciting educational tool. In the hands of a skilled practitioner it can result in provocative and innovative work. Meanwhile, I'll be eagerly awaiting the drive-through 'glaze your own' raku storefront.

Sam Kwan



Gordon on Raku, Cont. from p. 1

some west, some yin, some yang, some vibrant lustrous surface, some rough earthy understatement. It can remind us of the iridescent beetle's back or the rugged oyster shell, the fragile, the elemental, the temporary, the mutable.

I love the excitement of doing raku. It's fun. Instead of observing from the outside, you get to dive right in and play with the pots while they're dancing with heat. It's not only joy for the potter, but there is great potential for the pots to reflect this joy, this sense of fun. I can't imagine a better reason for doing raku, even if you throw away the pots afterward.

I love the fact that raku loosens me up. Even though raku is only about 20% of what I do, it has strongly influenced the way I look at the other 80%. Raku breaks up the "standard" pattern of firing. You get a chance to be more active and spontaneous and muck about with the pots while they are alive themselves. This can lead to variations like salt/saggar/raku firings, and low temperature soda vapour firing.

My experience with raku has changed the way I approach earthenware and has led me to develop a whole new group of reduction fired or reduction cooled cone 01 glazes. Working in raku has also inspired me to try silver nitrate at cone 10 and led to some beautiful reduction cooled gold crystalline glazes. Raku has also inspired my current tests with gold chloride ruby glazes from cone 07 to cone 1.

As with any style of pottery, there are some things I love about raku and some things I hate about it. Some days I simply don't like the smell of my smoky hair and clothes. But, what I really hate, is when some potters take the easy route and use raku firing as just another form of production ware —taking advantage of superficial "flash" to sell baubles under a pseudo oriental aura (probably using an unstable low silica content glaze). No firing process is immune to uninspired usage, like a mediocre form dunked in the same old copper matte glaze over and over again, or a mediocre form dunked in the same old temmoku over and over again. The problem is in the creative process, not the firing process.

Raku can be the spark to fire the imagination, the excitement to loosen a rigid technique. Having fun is actually very important.

Gordon Hutchens

BC Potter's Guild goes to the PNE
Sunday, August 24th, 1997
Volunteers needed for four hour shifts.
Please call Jane at 669 - 5645

Bill Rennie Clay & Architecture
June 27 to September 1, 1997

The Canadian Craft Museum presents an overview of Rennie's architecturally based ceramic work. Through the response to his work has come a broader understanding of 'craft', and an increased understanding of handbuilding.

Opening: Thursday, June 26th, 6 - 8
Canadian Craft Museum
639 Hornby Street
Cathedral Place Courtyard
Vancouver, BC (or call 604 - 687 - 8266)

Vapour Glazing

Cathi Jefferson attended the vapour glazing session at NCECA 97 in Las Vegas.

Traditionally, we have all believed that a Salt kiln is bad for the environment. We have understood that salt - NaCl - once put into the kiln chemically changes, with the sodium adhering to the clay surfaces (and every other surface in the kiln) and the chlorine is left to go up the chimney and into the air as toxic chlorine gas. No one has ever had conclusive proof that this really happens, we have all just come to accept this as fact.

Fortunately, Wil Shynkaruk and Ruth Ann Tudball have had the wisdom to investigate this long held belief with accurate testing and research methods. What they discovered was -IT'S NOT TRUE - and they have the data to prove it. They have determined that less than 2% of the salt put into the kiln actually chemically changes at all. More than 98% leaves the chimney as intact NaCl. Repeated samplings in different kilns verified that no chlorine gas was

detected leaving the chimney. Furthermore, soda may be more harmful due to the chemical changes occurring in the kiln.

Higher temperatures are more efficient than mid-range firings and it is also a waste to put salt into the kiln before reaching temperature. What was detected was carbon monoxide. This occurs with any fossil fuel burning kiln, car or gas-guzzling machine and definitely warrants our best efforts to build and fire our kilns as efficiently as possible.

This is wonderful. Once they publish their findings we shall benefit from their efforts. It is a relief to know that a salt kiln is no more harmful to the environment than other fossil-fuel burning kiln.

Cathi Jefferson

Mark Your Summer Calendar For
Saturday August 16th @ 7 p.m.
Linda Christianson will be showing
slides of her work at Malaspina College,
Nanaimo, BC.
\$5 drop-in to support the Tozan Kiln

CABC's 25th Anniversary

The members of the Potters Guild of B.C. extend our congratulations to the Crafts Association of B.C. for 25 years of services responding to the changing needs of B.C.'s craftspersons.

The various opportunities that the CABC offer to their membership encourage a strong sense of community and connection for craftspersons throughout the province. Benefits include a bi-monthly newsletter, a Mastercard merchant discount, artist referrals and insurance benefits.

The 25th Anniversary exhibition takes place at the Canadian Craft Museum during June and July of 1998. A lecture series during the same period as well as a studio map of artisans of B.C. are some of the projects supported by the CABC.

For more information about the Crafts Association or guidelines related to exhibiting in Crafrthouse, scholarships or other programs, call the CABC at (604) 687-6511.

Good Looks...Great Read!



*Why, even cowpokes out on the range stop what they're doing when **contact** rolls around. They like the quality of imagery and intelligent writing about every aspect of ceramics they find on those pages. You will, too.*

contact

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Guild News

John Leach may have come and gone, workshopped, lectured, toured, and told endless stories, all in seven days, but his impact on the local clay community, and the memory of his visit will linger for some time. He was an absolute pleasure to meet and to pontificate with about all things from pots to pets to plants and all topics in between! He gave the Gallery and Guild some thoughts about marketing and advertising and, I think, took away a lot about what we do as a Guild and how we do it. Many thanks to Gillian McMillan and family for having John stay with them, and for all those members who took him under their wing (Keith & Celia Rice-Jones, Carol Mayer, Rosemary Amon, and Alan McMillan). And, happily, this workshop was a blockbuster as far as revenue generated, so thanks also to all of you who attended and supported your Guild.

Made In Clay seems to have been over a long time ago now, though it's only been about three weeks. Darrel has written an excellent summary of all that was and will be again, so I won't elaborate but to suggest that a big THANK YOU should be extended to both Darrel and John for their enormous effort!! From the Guild office perspective, the new system of each booth managing their own sales simplified the whole process tremendously - the financial wrap-up only took a few days instead of a few weeks!

Also elsewhere in this issue is a summary of the new lead and cadmium regulations for both functional and non-functional clay pieces. Please be sure to call the local contact person for more information (Sheila Welock 666-5004). There's still time to make the necessary adjustments to your process now before the deadline kicks in.

The Annual General Meeting, held at the beginning of May, was a very successful event: the meeting was well attended, the life membership award brought together both current and new life members, and the reception following consisted of some incredible food (potlucked by the board), good beer and mediocre wine (it will be well aged by the next AGM!). Apart from the regular business of the meeting, a lot of

discussion centered around the newsletter in response to the committee report presented in the Annual Report. The direct cost of the newsletter (my apologies for the oversight in not having these figures at the meeting), based on creating 400 and mailing 325, works out to be \$857/mo. or \$8,570/yr (this does not include indirect expenses such as overhead). Anticipated advertising revenue per month is approximately \$170.

Although this discussion was initiated by the question of the newsletter covering its own costs (via membership revenue) and whether the yearly dues should be increased to supplement this service (current revenue does cover the direct costs and most indirect costs of producing the newsletter), it leads to the larger issue of funding for the Guild's operations. While the Gallery significantly contributes to overall operations, this is not a stable funding platform as it is based solely on the retail/tourist environment (although of course we in the Gallery do everything possible to capitalize on potential sales!). One option is to increase the membership fees, and as this action was decided against for the coming year, the other option to pursue is fundraising - which means coming to you, the membership, twice a year to ask for donations of pots that we can then structure a fundraising event around.

Lottery for Pottery was very successful as a fundraising event, and the board already anticipates hosting this again next year and on an annual basis thereafter. We plan on preselling tickets to this year's attendees at a reduced rate, and then opening it up to the public at large. Further details will be developed over the summer months. In the meantime, the Potters' Guild, in conjunction with the BC Chefs' Association, has planned a dinner auction event to take place on Saturday, September 20th at the Delta Pacific Hotel. As part of the cost for a five or seven course dinner, each of 300 or so place settings will be set with a plate donated by members of the Potters' Guild, which the ticket holder can then take home. The second part of the evening is structured around an auction, for which the Potters' Guild will also be seeking donations of larger priced pieces.

Funds raised from this event will be targeted towards reestablishing a scholarship fund, for which we need to build a large enough capital base to generate interest-paying scholarships.

So, the Guild looks forward to receiving your two donated dinner plates (12 - 14" diameter) by August 1st. Please anticipate hearing from us over the next 6 weeks to remind you of these much needed donations. Thank you.

Gallery News

Finally, a wee bit of news about the Gallery! April sales were not as brisk as anticipated, depleting our 10% gain in sales at the end of March compared to last year to only a 2% overall gain at the end of April. So far, May sales indicate a positive impact on sales to date, but we will probably still be short of our target amount by about 5%.

Next week, it is time to take down Linda Doherty's *Free as a bird* and set up John Cloutier's exhibit *A Canadian Portrait - the people of our heritage*. John's show will run June 5 - 27, with the opening reception to be held on June 5th, 6 - 8pm. For the summer months, *A Garden Tea Party*, which is open to all members to submit their tea-related pieces, will be set up on June 27/28. The opening reception will be on Thursday, July 3rd, 6 - 8pm. In August, the Gallery looks forward to *Fine Form: New Works by Mary Fox*. The featured artists during the summer months are: Kathryn O'Regan (June), Margaret Hsu (July), and Maggi Kneer (August).

The Gallery was very pleased to have a small exhibit of John Leach's work during May, to coincide with his lecture and workshop. Of the 14 pieces on display, 6 pieces have been sold. The exhibit will continue until early June, when the pieces for the book photographs will be put on display for sale (finally!).

Lastly, our new computer system is up and running!! All new work coming in to the Gallery (Wednesday - Friday only please) should be coded in the new format. If you have any questions, please call Julia or Jane (669-5645).

Jane Matthews

Sumas Brick Works

Located on Sumas Mountain, 5 kilometres east of Abbotsford, the Sumas Clay Products brick plant has a history that dates back to the early 1900's, when clay was first mined from the mountain.

The factory is owned and operated by the Upper Sumas Indian community. For more than 70 years the original beehive kilns have been used to produce clay-fired face brick, decorative bricks, flue liners, paving brick and drainage tiles. The company is the only manufacturer in Canada still using beehive kilns to produce these products.

I first set up my studio at the factory just over one year ago. Soon after I was joined by Leigh Harrington. We expanded the studio into the space above the machine-shop. This is a 70 year old building with heavy wood beams and flooring and lots of windows. A perfect studio. It had been used as storage space. The walls were covered with boxes of nuts and bolts, motor V-belts and unused equipment (not to mention years of dust and birds nests)! After clearing and re-organizing we had a sizeable production area.

Next we started on a kiln room. Having the use of one of the old beehives, this was the logical place to use, as we would not have to worry about burning down the building. Once again, extensive clean-up was needed because, in its' last incarnation, the kiln was used to burn truckloads of paper. We installed a gas kiln, donated by Coquitlam's Place des Arts, and we were in business.

During the winter we ran classes in beginners and ongoing pottery. This summer we are co-ordinating a workshop with Emily Carr College that features Robert Harrison. The history of Sumas Clay Products Brickyard makes it a wonderful location for an educational center for clay. This is one of its future possibilities, something like the Archie Bray Foundation in Montana. We are working on this concept with the Sumas Band Council, and are hopeful that a mutual arrangement can be found.

Brent Gloeckler

A Letter from Grandfather

26 - VI. 60

My dear Johnnie,

We are delighted to hear from both you & your Father that you want to come here for a year at any rate in November next. I have no doubt that you will fit in with the group we shall have & that you will pick up our shapes & methods very quickly & make a good contribution, but I want to say at the outset that, necessary as all that is, it is not the real thing for which you should be coming. That is all means to an end, not the end itself.

This is the day of the artist craftsman not of the journeyman potter. That means that any young person taking up a craft today as a vocation only justifies himself (or herself) by finding something to voice or say. That is his life, or true character, extended into his pots. Formerly this was not the case but today it is. We want from the artist potter the same sort of quality which we expect from a good author, poet, painter or composer. The journeyman potter's place has been taken by the factory.

Thus your main objective should be aesthetic — to know good pot from bad pot & to be able to find your way, with your own clear connections, amidst all the good & bad pots of past & present to making good, sincere and honest pots of your own.

I do not believe that there is any place in Europe where you can get a more helpful background for this endeavour than here and it would be my great pleasure and Janet's to try & give it to you.

After this last journey to America we both feel that a new effort is required of us at St. Ives to encourage our group of rather mature students, & the old hands too, towards freer and more living expression in pots. We think that the standard wares, especially, have become too careful, measured & weighted & waxed & calculated. Come & join in the effort to let the streams flow.

Now as to money, we can't pay as your Father has. The maximum we have paid a student towards the end of a good two year apprenticeship was 5 pounds 10 shillings to Peter Wood. We could start you at 5 pounds plus overtime @ 2s/9d p.h. & bonus which might be guessed @ 10 shillings a week. This would yield a net between 6 & 7 pounds p. week whilst you are here. Of course we shall keep a look out for a decent & not expensive place for you to stay. This is not a great deal as a living wage but it is as far as we can go on the student apprentice basis.

I doubt myself if one year will be long enough but that we shall see & if, as I expect, you soon master the shapes on our making list we can push your basic wage up a bit. We are busy with visitors already & with pots for coming shows. Just about got our feet on the ground again.

With love to you all
Grandfather

As you may have guessed, the Grandfather in this letter is Bernard Leach, and Johnnie is his grandson, John Leach, who kindly shared this letter with those attending the May 24th & 25th workshop he gave to the Potters Guild of B.C.

John also mentioned that his grandfather was right, he ended up taking over two years to complete his apprenticeship. editor



**September Fundraiser for
Potter's Guild of British Columbia
with the B.C. Chef's Association.**

We need lots of members to donate two 12" to 14" plates by August 1st. These will be used at a dinner with a substantial amount going to our guild. Please contact Jane at 604 - 669 - 6465

John Calver: A Workshop Review

The Richmond Potters' Club had an absolutely fantastic workshop with John Calver in April. If you are looking for workshop possibilities, you might want to consider him - we certainly feel he deserves to be better known in North America.

For me, the most fascinating thing about John was his approach. He is self-taught. He started off his working life as a civil engineer and then discovered clay. He established his workshop in 1973, when he got or made himself the basic equipment and dived in. He had to sell everything he made right from the start in order to keep going. Without anyone to tell him "approved" techniques, he arrived on his own.

He still uses the square bats he made when, as an impatient young man, he wanted to get going, not waste time diddling with cutting circles. Now they come in handy as a visual reference for squaring or otherwise

altering bowls and things. He has this same straight forward approach to everything. His throwing is riveting to watch - he centers as he throws, so there is no time spent on centering and coning and keeping to "perfection" all the way up. He has a date with perfection at the end of the process, not at the beginning - and he keeps it! His work is not at all self-consciously wobbly or extreme, but it has life and grace. His trimming is amazing. It left me kicking myself for not having thought of doing it that way too. His pieces are stretched and shaped with verve and economy. His handles and rims are vivid and sculptural without lots of extra equipment.

His approach to tools is sensible and self-sufficient. He demonstrated various ways of making them, and he supplied the materials for us to make our own. He has built his own kilns over the years, learning as he goes. He tells some wry stories about his earliest one, an electric kiln with very low resistance elements. But he used it to fire and sell and fire again and keep on learning.

He now fires at cone 10 - 11 stoneware, using a rich combination of slips and glazes, as well as impressed clay, to produce gorgeous and elegant tapestries of colour. You have to SEE the pieces (I've appended a short list of books and magazines where his work is included). And with all this, in a world of big egos, he is quiet, friendly, accessible and completely unpretentious. You weren't just treated to a display of virtuosity, you were taught how to do it, too. Everyone came away inspired, energized and in love with clay all over again.

Veronica Shelford

Publications featuring John's work:
Ceramic Review, March 1991
Ceramics Art & Perception, 1992/6
New Zealand Potter, Vol. 35, no. 2, 1993
Ceramics & Print by Paul Scott, A&C Black, 1994, pp 42 - 45
Advanced Pottery Techniques, by Doug Wensley, Crowood Press, 1995
The Potter's Palette, by Constant and Ogden, Chilton Book Co. 1996, pp 46.

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Ancient Clay Workshop

Throughout the evolution of Western civilization we have too often assumed that "progress" means a move from the uncivilized to the civilized, from the primitive to the sophisticated, from the inferior to the superior. As a result, Western artists have often turned their backs on the wonderful aesthetics, processes and techniques of the past.

Until quite recently tribal ceramic traditions were generally seen only as primitive oddities, a "living, ancient history", and were generally ignored in the study of ceramics. Fortunately, during the 20th century the appreciation and understanding of tribal art has increased dramatically, and we now recognize that tribal traditions are "primitive" only in the studio facilities and firing processes. The level of craft and aesthetics is as sophisticated as anything in historic or contemporary art...

The lower the technology level, the higher the potter's skill level. An understanding of ancient and tribal traditions increase our awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures world-wide and through history. More and more artists today are finding powerful aesthetic and spiritual inspiration in ancient and tribal art.

Vince Pitelka, head of the Tennessee Appalachian Center for Crafts, will be giving an "Ancient Clay" workshop this summer. This is a five day workshop in which participants will "learn by doing" the tribal, pre-glaze, pre-kiln techniques of forming, decorating and firing their pots. The focus will be on simple vessels and sculpture using pinch and coil methods. There will be an emphasis on the broad diversity of decorative effects used prior to glaze development. The surfaces will be finished with clay slips, burnishing and polishing. There will be several colours of terra sigillata, an ultra-refined slip which gives either a satin gloss when unburnished, or a hard, glassy sheen when it is burnished.

When firing, Vince uses a very low bisque and transfers the still warm wares onto a bonfire. The bisque reduces (but doesn't eliminate) the high losses associated with open firing. The bonfire uses the classic starved-reduction, blackware manure firing that is practiced by the Pueblo potters.

Fire is smothered with crushed manure and sand which turn the wares black, with subtle shadings of tan and brown.

A primary appeal of these methods is that the processes involve almost no modern technology. This feature is difficult for many modern ceramicists to accept, given our fascination for tools and equipment. Once experienced, however, a tribal approach to ceramics is tremendously liberating, and even many "high-tech" people periodically return to the basics with handbuilt, bonfired work.

The workshop will be hosted by Michael McDowell, at his home and studio 10 miles north of Bellingham, WA on August 4 - 8 and August 11 - 15. The workshop dates have been chosen to coincide with the cooling period of the Tozan kiln, so anyone wanting to participate in both can do so. Anybody wishing to keep lodging and meals to a minimum is invited to camp out on Michael's lawn and join in for group meals. Michael's large organic garden will provide a good start.

Workshop size is limited to 16, cost is \$200(US). This includes tools, slips and terra sig. Custom blended clay will be available for purchase. Those wishing to attend should send a non-refundable \$50(US) deposit to Michael McDowell at PO Box 4125, Bellingham, WA 98227. Indicate whether you intend to camp on the lawn. For information in CANADA on Ancient Clay workshop or Tozan firing, please contact Veronica Shelford at (250) 246 - 1509 or email <shelford@mail.island.net>

Veronica Shelford

New Lead and Cadmium Regulations

The Canadian Department of Health has amended the Hazardous Products Act (hard to believe that our humble pots fall under this, but it is so) to reduce the amounts of allowable lead and cadmium in any clay object that might conceivably be used for food use.

If you decorate the interior or rim of a cup, bowl, plate, etc. it must not leach lead or cadmium over the new legal limit (which is quite small). If you are using commercial underglazes or glazes that are colourful -especially in the red, yellow and orange range- your work may need to be tested or adapted. If you are mixing your own low-fire slips and glazes using commercial stains (Mason, etc.), you should check the individual components of each stain.

Raku platters or bowl forms that use commercial glazes may also need to be checked. Anything that could be used or mistaken for food use needs a stamped warning on the base, in block capitals of not less than 3mm in height which reads: DANGER! CONTAINS LEAD AND/OR CADMIUM. DO NOT USE FOR FOOD. Oh yes, this must also be in French.

If you have any questions about how this applies to your own work, please contact Sheila Welock, Canada Health and Safety at (604) 666 - 5004.

Karen Opas

Gallery of BC Ceramics - Upcoming Deadlines for Submissions

June 23 - Submission of work for the July exhibit **A Garden Tea Party**, in the Gallery of BC Ceramics. All members of the Potters' Guild are encouraged to bring work in for this non-juried show. Work will leave the gallery as it sells (high tourist time) so we will need to have backup stock. Please bring your business cards to display with your work, and please tag the pieces with retail prices (50% commission), your initials and number of piece. Call Jane if you have any questions (604)-669-5645 or email bcpguild@intouch.bc.ca.

July 31 - Deadline for Exhibit Proposals for 1998. Application forms and guidelines are available in the Gallery or we can mail one to you.

David Lambert Pays a Visit

Good Lord, there are a staggering number and variety of people visiting Granville Island. What with pots being sold at Circle Craft, the Gallery of BC Ceramics, Craft House, two working studios and a private gallery, the ceramics community is well represented. It would be interesting to explore the reason for such a solid representation, but I suspect people like Tam Irving and Geoff Massey laid the foundation, and we are all to be grateful for this.

I'm not often surprised by visitors to my studio, but it was unnerving to have David Lambert walk in. He visited during my early years here, but since he died so long ago I hadn't expected to feel his presence again.

His voice was its usual softness, the smile warm and the twinkle in the eye still sharp. He was more than a little pleased, he said, at the vibrancy of the ceramics community. He was one of those people who helped lay the foundation to our much envied state.

I believe he felt that his low-fired ware had been neglected in that wave of Leach-Hamada stoneware work of the 1960's. So when he saw all the terra cotta on the island he was both amused and satisfied. "It's taken a while," he said. When I said that the craftsmanship kept improving he concurred. And then noted, "It would be - or would have been- important to have a school of crafts in the province."

We discussed this for a while, noting the strength of interest in clay, even without a central school for the handcrafted object. It became apparent that each potter, regardless of training or background, must represent all potters. We allow people to believe in our work; respect the clay work of others; celebrate the gifted among us and treat generously those who helped set up our rather incredible scene and place in the arts.

The shrug of his shoulders seemed to say "Carry on." And then he departed. And I hadn't offered him a coffee. Next time I will.

Bob Kingsmill

Unclassifieds

For sale:

Estrin Electric Computerized kiln. 10 cu. ft. new elements, lid needs work. \$1000 OBO. Brenda at 224 - 3410.

Claything Pottery Studio Sale

Sat/Sun from 10 - 5. June 14 & 15.
3969 St Pauls Ave., North Vancouver.
Call Heather Cairns at 985 - 1779 for directions.

For Sale:

Olympic Electric kiln, #2318. 4.7 cu. ft., cone 10, ten years old. \$200
Call Otto at 930 - 2201

Bed & Breakfast:

Self-contained studio. Private entrance. TV, micro-wave, bath, garden. Kerrisdale area of Vancouver. \$45 single, \$55 double; weekly rates can be arranged.
604 - 263 - 6061

Wanted:

Used electric kiln(around 7 cu. ft.), electric wheel and scale in very good condition. Please call Eun Joo at (604) 669 -5696.

Art Student:

wanting to work with ceramicists, particularly interested in ceramic sculpture. Willing to do odd jobs. Experience in building, throwing, mold-making, glazing and firing. Please call Janice at 821 - 1510.

Osteopath wanted:

If you know of one in Lower Mainland, please contact Heather at 466 - 3343.

You are invited to an exhibition & sale of recent pottery & garden sculpture at the studio of Connie Glover on Sunday, June 22 from 10 until 4. 1872-136 street, South Surrey.

For Sale:

Estrin Slabroller, 36", excellent condition \$2000 OBO.
Contact Charmian at 321 - 9475.

For Sale:

Bags of burnt umber at \$5 per pound. Large floor scale at \$190.
Call Linda at (604) 420 - 0415

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More Unclassifieds

Through the Fire: Sale & Exhibition
Six Salt Spring Potters (Gary Cherneff, Susan Hirst, Denys James, Terry Ryals, Melissa Searcy, Judy Weeden)
September 13 & 14, 10 am - 5 pm
At Judy Weeden's Country Studio, 125 Primrose Lane, Salt Spring Island (follow North End Rd. to Whims Rd.).
Call (250) 537 - 5403 for more information.

For Sale:

10 cu. ft. gas kiln and furniture,
\$500 OBO.
Call 275 - 2724

Calls for Entry

"Visual Arts Development Award"
provides grants between \$3000 and \$5000 for emerging or mid-career artisans learning new processes or in a self-study or mentorship program. This award is open to any one year resident of BC who is not currently a student. For more information contact Elizabeth Shefrin at the Assembly of British Columbia Arts Council, #201- 3737 Oak st., Vancouver, BC, V6H 2M4, tel. (604) 738 - 0749, fax (604) 738 - 5161 or email: assembly@cyberstore.ca
Application Deadline is June 16, 1997

"Uniquely BC" is the largest regional wholesale gift show in BC. There is a sponsored section available to craftspeople who have not previously marketed at this venue. Juried from actual work, jurying fee of \$35. The show is at BC Place Stadium, Sept. 7 - 9. Contact BC Creative Arts Show, 2680 Progressive Way, Clearbrook, BC, V2T 3X8 or call 1-800-672 -0103 or (604)857 - 1788 or fax (604) 854 - 3087.
Application Deadline is July 4, 1997.

"Crafts Association of BC" celebrates 25 years in 1998. A commemorative, juried exhibition will be hosted by the Canadian Craft Museum in June/July 1998. Open to all BC residents or CABC members. No jury fee for existing CABC members or \$47 for CABC membership and jury fee or \$25 jury fee for non-members.
Application Deadline is August 22, 1997

Workshops

Christel Harrison (Occupational Therapist), featured at NCECA will be giving a presentation on common physical problems and injuries among clay workers. She will suggest treatments and approaches, as well as preventative measures for everyday work. There will be an opportunity to ask about your own injuries after the lecture. Thursday, August 12, (time not yet finalized) at Emily Carr. Fee is \$20. Contact Jane at the Potter's Guild (604) 669 - 5645 for more info.

Emily Carr Summer Courses:

*****Ceramic Site Specific Architecture**
July 28 - August 15,

Mon - Fri, 9 am - 12:30pm \$386

Instructor: Robert Harrison

The focus of this course will be on the construction of on-site work at Sumas Brick Works and Clay Products. You will explore individual ideas, first through drawings, models and critiques, and then through hands-on activity. Through the process of building, students will become familiar with engineering, design principles and a variety of construction materials. 3 credits.

*****Please note that this course needs more registrants to go forward. If Robert Harrison's workshop is not put on, then the Christl Harrison workshop on potting injuries and how to prevent them will also be cancelled.**

Handbuilding Workshop

Saturday, August 9, 10 am - 5 pm

Robert Harrison \$45

Through slides, lecture, discussion and the possibility of hands-on activity an introduction to on-site sculpture. You are encouraged to bring your own ideas, sketches and maquettes.

To register, contact ECIAD Summer Credit Program 1399 Johnston St., Granville Island, Vancouver, BC V6H 3R9, tel. (604)844-3800 or fax (604)8443801 or email: psinfo@eciad.bc.ca

All Women's Anagama Firing with Linda Christianson (August 16 - 26). \$250. Includes all glaze materials and firing. Free primitive camping on site or student residence at \$19.99 nightly. Contact Cathi Jefferson, 4477 Strathcona Rd. North Van., BC V7G 1G7 or tel.(604)929-9175

Wood Fire Kiln Art 370. 3 credit Anagama firing from June 15 - 28. Accommodation as above. Contact Jackson Hirota at (250)741-2432 or register at Registrar, Malaspina University College, 900-5th St., Nanaimo, BC Canada, V9R 5S5. \$300

The Green House at Christina Lake offers art retreats in a renovated turn-of-the-century farmhouse, with accommodation for up to 10. This summers plans include building a wood fired kiln for salt-glazing. Contact 1920 Richie Road, Christina Lake, BC, V0H 1E2 or phone/fax (250)447-6556.

Denys James Studio on Salt Spring
Awakening the Imagination - June 2 - 6, Larry Green, Jungian oriented psychotherapist, and Denys James use multi-media exploration with emphasis on clay. For those interested in exploring the pathways between the unconscious mind and the generation of form, surface, image and symbols. Fee \$340, includes materials.

Handbuilding and Low Fire Intro. June 16 - 27 with Denys James. Use clay as an expressive medium, firing wood, soda, saggar, pit and raku kilns. For those new to clay. Fee \$475.

Shifting Directions - rediscovering your creative force. July 14 - 25. Rediscover your beginner's enthusiasm through a variety of creative learning approaches. Fee is \$475.

Mexico 1997, San Miguel De Allende, December 4 - 18 with Denys James. Initial sign up now open.

For further information or to register contact Denys James at 182 Welbury Drive, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2L8, Canada, phone/fax (250)537-4906.

More Workshops



Workshops, Cont.

The Archie Bray Foundation offers Tile & Architectural Terra Cotta June 23 - July 5 with instructor Cary Esser. Fee is \$400 (US), cheap housing available. Woodfire Workshop from Sept. 4 - 7 with instructors McKenzie Smith and Jeanette Rakowski. Fee is \$165 (US)
Contact: Archie Bray Ceramic Foundation
2915 Country Club Avenue, Helena, MT 59602. Tel. 406 - 443 - 3502

Traditional Indigenous Pottery at Kenderine Campus at Emma Lake, Saskatchewan, August 25 - 29. Marsha Gomez works primarily with clay, stone and fiberglass. She learned her skills within the traditional framework of the Southeastern USA. "I myself have become a vessel to the vessels that are created through my heart and hands. The energy and spirit that go into my work result in an expression of reverence and respect for women, the Earth and the indigenous way of life".
To register call (306) 966 - 5539

Randy Brodnax Workshop
July 13 - 19. \$800 includes accom. at local B&B, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bring your own bisque fired pieces. Cedar Grove Pottery on beautiful Galiano Island, and Texas craftsman, Randy Brodnax, offer 7 days of pottery instruction. Each day features a different decorative process and firing technique. Firing includes wood and gas fired raku, saggar pits and sawdust reductions. Kiln construction and firing instruction will be emphasized. Contact Sandy Dolph, Cedar Grove Pottery, RR#2, Galiano Island, BC, Canada, V0N 1P0 or tel. (250) 539-5814.

Raku Workshop with Sandra Dolph
June 21 & June 22, from 9:30 am - 4 pm
Cost is \$138, includes lunch both days. Students will bring 6 to 8 bisqued pots made from raku clay, size limit of 10" high. Instruction on raku process, kiln construction, safety considerations & post-firing techniques. Throwing demonstrations on large, stretched vessels will also be given. See contact address for Randy Brodnax workshop above for more information.

Mudslinger Clay Studio
Summer Workshops:
June 22 - Smoke Firing
July 5 & 6 - Soda Firing - Connie Glover
August 10 - Paper Clay - Jacqui Berglund
Call 688 - CLAY for details.

Ongoing Workshops

Mudslinger Clay Studios welcomes new members to their drop-in studio in Gastown. Membership fee is \$25 annually with a drop in fee of \$8 for 4 hours. Call 688 - CLAY for information on hours and technical support.

The Port Moody Centre for the Arts announces "The Clay Studio Program" a drop-in program designed for people who have some experience in clay. Tuesday days and Wednesday evenings. Cost is \$30 & volunteer time. Call 469 - 4561 for details on any of the above programs.



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